

Bulletin

Quarterly Bulletin No. 389 January 2023

<https://tasfieldnats.org.au>

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we study natural history.

Mountain River Excursion

Saturday, 5th November 2022

The November monthly excursion followed up a talk given by John Gooderham - the founder of the Waterbug company - about the ecology and biodiversity of freshwater environments in and around Tasmania (see page 5). The purpose of this excursion was to demonstrate and expand upon points from the talk.



Field Nats at Mountain River
Photo: Amanda Thompson

After confusion over the meeting place, the group gathered at the car park at 10.30, where we were introduced to the Huon catchment watch, and John's family who had joined us for the day. Chairs and tables had been arranged next to the river for examining specimens. Here John briefed us on what we were doing: collecting and sorting through specimens from

the river, collecting data that would be contributed to a dataset for river health in Tasmania. John had encouraged us to download an app called Waterbug, to record our findings. The app had a dichotomous key to help with identifying our finds, a table where we entered our observations, and a selection of habitats that we were sampling (here it was a shallow, clear and rocky stream, with overhanging riparian vegetation). Unfortunately, we later realized that there was a malfunction with the app on Apple phones, and the data was lost when the app was closed: Fortunately, not much data was lost. A few of us volunteered to sample the river and were provided with waterproof suites and sweep nets. After about 10 minutes or so of frantically waving the nets in every crevice and inhabitable space for tiny invertebrates, we deposited our catches in buckets which were divvied up between groups to sort through. Each find was deposited in an ice cube tray, with pipettes and spoons.



First catch your waterbug
Photo: Eddie Gall



Waterbugs!
Photo: Lynne Maher

The most common finds were mayflies and caddisflies. The mayflies had an interesting method of maneuvering; some scuttled along like spiders and some wiggled and swayed. These movements are unique to different groups and used to differentiate them.



Identifying and logging the finds
Photo: Amanda Thompson

It had eventually turned out to be a lovely day, with plenty of sunshine and temperatures in the 20s.



Stone fly nymph
Photo: Amanda Thompson

It got so warm that we moved to a more shaded area to stop the specimens from overheating. The group diligently worked their way through the samples for several hours. Some of us (me included) looked around the surrounding area. I found some interesting rove beetles, and a colourful harvestman (*Calliuncus*, I think), while Amanda found *Leperina decorata*, a large and very ornamented beetle.



Leperina decorata
Photo: Amanda Thomson

At 2.10 we finished examining our finds and all species had been tallied up. In total we found 23 species and calculated the river health score was 7.3 (very good).

At this point, the group began heading back to the cars or looking around the general area. Kevin, Abbey and I looked for snails on the river bank.

Bruno Bell

Christmas BBQ and Australian Natural History Medallion Presentation

Saturday, 3rd December 2022

The 2022 annual Christmas BBQ was held at Randall's Bay, near the mouth of the Huon River. Perfect weather and great attendance made for an excellent, relaxing day.

The Guest of Honour was Genevieve Gates, former president and past holder of every TFNC committee position. The club had the pleasure of presenting Dr Genevieve Gates with the 2022 Australian Natural History Medallion. This prestigious national prize was awarded to her for her contribution to mycology, in fieldwork, education, and continuing involvement in citizen science.



President Eddie Gall presenting medal to Genevieve Gates (left) following a round-up of Genevieve's career highlights from Annabel Carle (right).

Photo: Amanda Thomson

Over the years, Genevieve has sent over 4000 specimens to the National Herbarium in Melbourne, including 13 type specimens, and over 2000 to the Tasmanian Herbarium in Hobart, where she also volunteered. She is the author or co-author of nearly 100 species new to science, which have been collected over hundreds of field trips, in all sorts of weather. As well as her scientific papers, Genevieve co-wrote the 'A Field Guide to Tasmanian Fungi' with David Ratkowski. She established and is an authority for the Tasmanian Fungi Facebook page which has more than 18,000 members.

Congratulations Genevieve!

In recent years Tasmania has been most successful with Sarah Lloyd winning this same award in 2018 and Simon Grove in 2019.

After the presentation, many members went for a short excursion on the track through the Randalls Bay Conservation Area, a coastal reserve extending to Eggs and Bacon Bay. After ascending the steps up a sandstone escarpment, the track passes through open *Eucalyptus tenuiramus* (silver peppermint) forest. The trees were filled with bird calls such as *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae* (New Holland honeyeaters), *Pardalotus punctatus* (spotted pardalote) and *Platycercus caledonicus* (green rosellas).

In the understory we found a variety of flowering plants including *Wahlenbergia* spp (Bluebells), *Leptospermum scoparium* (common tea tree), *Lomandra longifolia* (sags), *Thelymima ixioides* (spotted sun orchids), *Caleana minor* (little flying duck orchids), *Dillwynia glaberrima* (smooth parrot-pea), and *Goodia lanata* (native primrose).

The warm weather had brought out pollinators such as *Exoneura* spp. (red-bottomed bees), butterflies such as *Neolucia agricola* (Fringed blue) and beetles.

An interesting finding was what some thought could be *Casuarina duncanii*, one of the sheoak family that is normally found as isolated small stands higher on the foothills in the South-east. Positive identification awaits to be confirmed.

The track led out to a point with extensive views of the mouth of the Huon River, Bruny Island and the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. The track then led through *Eucalyptus obliqua* (stringybark) forest before a descent, Mickeys Beach, a small, secluded bay. Before returning to Randalls Bay, some checked out some interesting sandstone formations at the far end of the beach.



Photo: Amanda Thomson

Eddie Gall

Albatross in Tasmanian Waters.

Speaker: Els Wakefield

Thursday 4th August 2022

The President thanked Els for agreeing to speak at such short notice when Dr David Hocking (TMAG) was

unavailable, yet another Covid casualty to our planned programme.

For a number of years, regular pelagic trips have departed from Eaglehawk Neck on the 'Pauletta' - a deep-sea fishing, bird and whale watching charter boat. The 'Pauletta' is large enough to go into the deeper waters beyond the continental shelf where plentiful food wells up, attracting a number of fish which in turn attract birds including many species of Albatross. These trips are organized in Tasmania by Paul Brooks and other locals, but also by various mainland birders throughout the year. Paul can be contacted by email on theleadboots@gmail.com if anyone is interested to be on the list.

In addition, Els Wakefield has organized an annual voyage on the fishing vessel 'Velocity' - leaving from Southport to visit Pedra Branca and the Mewstone where the two southern colonies of Shy Albatross occur in Tasmania. If interested in future voyages, contact Els by email on elswakefieldtas@gmail.com



Mewstone
Photo : Els Wakefield

Albatross take about 5 to 8 years to reach maturity and only return to their nesting sites to breed, using the same nesting site each time. They pair for life but only breed in alternative years, producing one chick at a time. Albatross can live from 50 to 70 years. Most have long been known to be ocean wanderers able to cross entire oceans in a few days but tracking data has shown that males and females move in different directions to feed in separate marine basins.

Els showed us some of her own beautiful Albatross photos detailing 16 Albatross species all which have been sighted on pelagic boat trips from Eaglehawk Neck.

We were shown their different identifying features. Beginning with the true Wandering Albatross, *Diomedea exulans*, which has the largest bill and wingspan, Els explained that there are two subspecies that regularly visit Tasmania. These include the New Zealand Wanderers, *Diomedea exulans antipodensis* and *Diomedea exulans gibsoni*. There is also the Amsterdam Albatross, *Diomedea amsterdamensis*, with only 100 to 140 pairs breeding solely on Amsterdam Island in the Indian Ocean. This species was only sighted for the second time in Australia when it was photographed in Tasmanian waters on 6 Feb 2022.

The Royal Albatross, another of the large albatross has two subspecies - the Southern Royal Albatross *Diomedea epomophora* and Northern Royal Albatross *Diomedea epomophora sanfordi*.

We learnt that the Mewstone has the largest breeding colony of the Shy Albatross, *Thalassarche cauta*, which is endemic to Tasmania. Els showed her photos of Shy Albatross adult and chicks seen on the voyages to Pedra Branca and the Mewstone.



Shy Alabross - *Thalassarche cauta*
Photo credits: Els Wakefield

Salvin's Albatross *Thalassarche salvini* is a shy-type albatross with a grey hood, a paler cap and blackish webbing to primaries forming a neat dark wing-point in the under-wing. Another shy-type is the vagrant Chatham Albatross, *Thalassarche eremita*, which has a

much darker hood in all ages than the Salvin's and a bright yellow orange bill with a dark spot at the tip of the lower mandible, in adults. They breed on Pyramid Rock near Chatham Island, New Zealand, and were first sighted in Tasmania on 3 September 2011.

Other photos we were shown included the Black-browed Albatross, *Thalassarche melanophrys*, Campbell Albatross *Thalassarche impavida*, Grey-headed Albatross *Thalassarche chrysostoma* and the Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross *Thalassarche carteri* which is the smallest Albatross of the southern oceans. Adults have a bold yellow culmen stripe along the top of the bill, grading to a pink tip. In addition, there were photos of Buller's Albatross *Thalassarche bulleri*, Sooty Albatross *Phoebastria fusca* and the Light-mantled Sooty Albatross *Phoebastria palpebrata*.

During and after the talk Els fielded questions from the audience. Afterwards she was thanked by the President and presented with a Tasmanian Field Naturalist mug.

Records of pelagics can be found on eBird at <https://ebird.org/explore>

Annabel Carle

Speaker: John Gooderham – The Waterbug Company

Thursday 3rd November 2022

“The Rivers of Southern Tasmania – a Guide to Macro-tourism and Waterbug Watching”.

This was a lively and entertaining talk. Full of photographs and videos of ‘waterbugs’ (freshwater invertebrates) in action - often moving in for the kill!

John Gooderham, Edward Tsyrlin and Tom Sloan of the ‘Waterbug Company’ with the support of their numerous sponsors, have produced the ‘**The Waterbug app**’, which we were encouraged to download free of charge in preparation for the excursion to Mountain River on Saturday. It is available in both Apple and Android from either App Store or from Google Play. This app uses simplified user-friendly keys using

morphologically and behaviourally obvious features or as John termed it ‘green-level taxonomy.’ As with land-based invertebrates, identification of waterbugs to genus, family or tribe is often all that is possible.

The Waterbug app was developed for use in the National Waterbug blitz which has been operating now for over 20 years across Australia. For more info see: <https://www.waterbugblitz.org.au/>

The app uses a system called SIGNAL (Stream Invertebrate Grade Number- Average - Level) to grade the waterbugs families and subfamilies. The higher the SIGNAL score, the healthier the water (Chessman 2003). A rule of thumb is:- the healthier the water the more species with legs will be found in it! Or as John puts it “six legs are good, no legs are bad”. The stoneflies (Plecoptera), caddis flies (Trichoptera) and mayflies (Ephemeroptera) are three key freshwater macroinvertebrate groups - their presence indicating healthy water.

For example, in the waters of New Town Rivulet - coming straight off ‘the Mountain’ - a total of 24 waterbug taxa can be found with a SIGNAL rating of 5.5. But where the rivulet reaches Lenah Valley Road, near the National Foods Ltd factory, these numbers begin to fall. By the time the rivulet reaches the Brooker Highway the species count is down to 4 with a health rating of 1.1.

Mayflies are often used to flag an alert to decreasing water quality. They are so sensitive that they can be thriving on one side of a bridge, but completely absent downstream on the other side of the bridge.

To support this work, Landcare Tasmania is working with the Waterbug Company to set up Waterwatch groups to help monitor and survey their local waters. The TFNC Saturday excursion was supported by The Mountain River Waterwatch group which was formed in June 2022.

Our thanks go to John Gooderham for introducing so many of us to a whole new area of natural history!

Ref: Chessman, Bruce C. *Marine and Freshwater Research*, 2003, 54, 95-103

Annabel Carle

December Members Night talks

Thursday, 1st December 2022

We had five very interesting short Members talks.

1. A Miscellaneous Medley by Anna McEldowney

This talk included some very interesting short videos recorded by Patrick McEldowney:

- How Echidnas get under an Echidna proof fence! (They flatten themselves!)
- Resident Longley Grey Goshawk
- Feeding Frozen prawns to a Sting Ray (as their mouths are under their body they effectively vacuum or suction up their prey into their mouths where they are chewed and shredded)

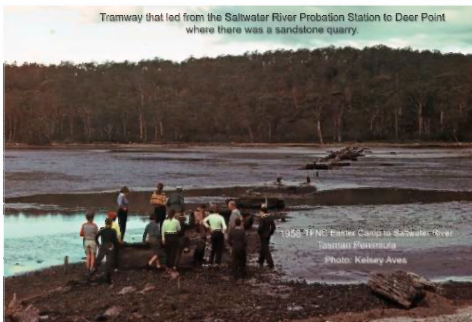
2. Tasmanian Land Snails by Bruno Bell

Bruno gave us a brief overview of the Tasmanian land snail families with his own excellent photographic examples.

3. 'Where are the Tas Nats now?' by Annabel Carle

Annabel presented the identification of some (of the more interesting) locations of photos taken by past president Kelsey Aves from 1951 to 1961 inc.

These photos will be placed on the TFNC website during February – where members will be able to have a look at them.



4. Shorebirds in southern Tasmania by Mick Brown

Using his own great photographs Mick gave us a quick overview of the range of interesting shorebirds we could see around Hobart. We learnt the migratory Red

Knot which forages along the tide line is thought to have got its name from King Cnut (Canute) who ordered the tide to stop (but of course it didn't).



Bar-tailed Godwits and Red Knots
Photo: Mick Brown



Hooded plovers
Photo: Mick Brown

5. An overview of Australian weevils (Curculionoidea) with an emphasis on Tasmanian species by Otto Bell

Otto explained the known taxonomy of weevils and the talk was illustrated using his own excellent photographs.

Hans Wapstra

Hans Wapstra, a long-time TFNC member and friend of many of us passed away in November last year. He will be remembered for his enormous contribution to Tasmanian botany. After immigrating to Tasmania, he worked for many years with the National Parks and Wildlife Service where he undertook considerable field

work. His major works include collaborating to write *The Orchids of Tasmania*, and writing with his wife, Annie, and son, Mark, *Tasmanian Plant Names Unravelling*. He was instrumental in establishing the Peter Murrell Reserve in Blackmans Bay, so it was very appropriate that his public farewell service was held there.

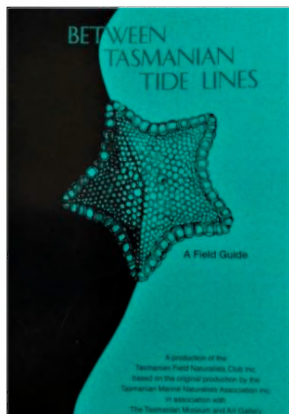
Vale Hans.

From the Committee ..

(compiled by Annabel Carle)

“BETWEEN THE TASMANIAN TIDELINES – A FIELD GUIDE” 4TH EDITION

The popularity of this field guide continues, and, in response, this new edition has been published and on sale just in time for Christmas! In all good bookshops or is online from our own Bookshop <https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/bookshop/> for \$15 plus postage. Look for the new sea green coloured cover! The taxonomy has been updated by Simon Grove and Fiona Scott.



It's a handy book to take to the beach with the children to introduce them to whatever they may find on our seashores!

Our thanks go to Lynne Maher who took on the difficult job of coordinating the editing of this update.

ONLINE STUDY TO IDENTIFY WHAT MOTIVATES VOLUNTEERS TO PARTICIPATE IN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS (I.E. CLUBS LIKE OURS!)

Tracy Schultz is a social researcher at the University of Queensland. Currently working on a project, led by [Dr Angela Dean](#), on the benefits of volunteering, and what types of experiences and feedback help strengthen the capacity and motivation of volunteers, enabling them to continue making such a valuable contribution. As part of that project, they are hoping to survey environmental stewardship volunteers to explore their perceptions of volunteering and stewardship. The project website can be accessed [here](#).

The study is completely anonymous and takes approximately 10-12 minutes to complete. Everyone that completes the survey will be offered the chance to win one of two vouchers worth \$300.

The survey is being run by researchers from the University of Queensland with support from the NSW Environmental Trust.

To complete the survey or to find out more information click [here](#).



2022 THE TASMANIAN NATURALIST

All members should have received their copy of the 2022 edition of the Tasmanian Naturalist. If for some reason you do not yet have your copy, please contact Sabine Borgis our Naturalist Editor at editor@tasfieldnats.org.au

Thank you, Sabine, for all the hard work that goes into producing this annual publication.

2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY 2 MARCH 2023.

As required by our Club Rules, we provide with this Bulletin notice of this meeting and a nomination form for the 2023 committee. The completed nomination forms must be received by the TFNC Secretary by Monday 20 February 2023 (secretary@tasfieldnats.org.au)

Please consider contributing to the club by standing for our committee. It can be very rewarding and great friendships are made! Nominations may be received for all positions whether they are currently occupied or not.

There are six committee meetings held each year, currently held by Zoom in the evening of the last Thursday of January, March, May, July, September and November. Committee members are expected to attend most of these meetings.

At the time of writing we are still looking for someone to be *President* and also either to be the *Secretary* or the *Treasurer* of our club. These are key positions, and we would prefer to find someone with previous committee/minute taking experience.

Please think about it and don't wait to be asked, please come and talk to one of the existing committee members!

The nomination form is attached on the last page of this Bulletin.

ANNUAL SUBS ARE NOW DUE PLEASE!

Our subs are easy to pay! By PayPal, direct deposit, cheque or at a regular TFNC meeting. For details see our membership website page.

<https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/membership/>

These membership fees have not increased in over 10 years! (Thanks to our book sales income!)

Please note, to stand for the committee and to vote at the AGM - subs must be paid please by 2 March 2023.

HAVE YOUR CONTACT DETAILS CHANGED?

- Have we got *all the names of your family members*? If payment is made by PayPal this information is often missing

- Have we got your mobile number?

Please email ANY contact detail changes to our Treasurer at treasurer@tasfield.nats.org.au

iNATURALIST

This is the second year that TFNC has been recording observations of species on iNaturalist - a world-wide electronic social network of naturalists, citizen scientists and biologists. It shares recording of observations of biodiversity across the world using mobile applications or a website and is a joint initiative of the Californian Academy of Scientists and the National Geographic Society. By September 2022 it had already logged over 115 million observations. Using iNaturalist means our observations are recorded and available to other citizen scientists and researchers, increasing their value.

Clare Hawkins gave an introductory presentation on Zoom in 2020 to our general meeting and her very useful instructions on how to use iNaturalist are available from our website <https://tasfieldnats.org.au/data/documents/iNat-for-Field-Nats-Sept20.pdf>. As new users have found, once you have used iNaturalist a couple of times, it becomes very easy.

The full set of our iNaturalist results for 2022 can be found at <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/tasmanian-field-naturalists-club-tfnc-2022>.

The table on the next page summarises our year's excursion findings on iNaturalist. Over the year, 23 different members added observations. They made 1,615 observations of 696 separate species and increased the knowledge of Tasmania's life forms via an easy to access medium.

With iNaturalist, it is never too late to add observations so the number could grow further as members catch up with any black log of photos.

The number of species recorded in each location should not be taken as an indication of the biodiversity of an area. Our observations suggest the number of species recorded depends much more on the number of observers and the weather on the day!

Many observation identifications have been confirmed by specialists, both locals and non-Tasmanians, showing interest in our findings by specialists from elsewhere.

Thanks to all those who have been recording their observations on iNaturalist. It can sometimes take a while to identify down to the species level. Special thanks go to Peter Crofts who has been setting up and administering TFNC projects on iNaturalist.

Also, thanks to everyone else who comes along on the excursions – some members, who don’t use iNaturalist, find and point out interesting things for us to record that otherwise we might have missed!

Eddie Gall

iNaturalist observations made on TFNC Excursions in 2022

Excursion	Number of Observations	Species Count
February - Old Convict Road, Orford	224	130
March - Port Huon to Geeveston Walkway	59	54
Easter Camp - Mt Farrell	96	73
Easter Camp - Lake Plimsoll, Howards Road, and Mt Jukes Mine	25	21
Easter Camp - The Confluence and Newell Creek	147	85
Easter Camp - The Vale of Belvoir	177	116
May - Queens Domain with Jamie Kirkpatrick	50	33
June – Betsey Island (a)	209	108
July - Timbs Track	154	94
August - Cancelled due to bad weather		
September - Mortimer Bay Track	166	104
October – TLC Little Swanport Reserve	202	131
November – Mountain River with John Gooderham	66	50
December – Christmas BBQ at Randalls Bay	40	31
Tas Field Naturalists 2022	1,615	696 (b)

(a) There were observations on Betsey Island that were recorded separately onto the Natural Values Atlas and not on iNaturalist.

(b) In the total, each species identified is only counted once regardless of the number of excursions it was found on.

INFORMAL EXCURSION TO SURVEY FOR THE
MIENA JEWEL BEETLE 10:15 AM SUNDAY
5TH FEBRUARY 2023

The current intention is to meet at 10:15 AM at Sealy’s Store Café, corner of Alexander St and Dalrymple St, Bothwell. This is 1 hour and 15 minutes from Hobart. After a cuppa, we will drive to Liawenee, a further hour’s drive, to search for the Miena Jewel Beetle, *Castiarina insculpta*. In the afternoon, we may also look in the Lake Augusta area. Emergence of the beetle is dependent on the coincidence of the flowering of the *Ozothamnus hookeri* and warm temperatures. Consequently, please check the TFNC website close to the 5th February for any last minute changes.

NEW WEED THREAT TO COASTLINES OF THE
D’ENTRECASTEAUX CHANNEL & HUON ESTUARY.

Rice grass (*Spartina anglica*) is known as an ‘ecosystem transformer’ - it establishes in coastal mud flats where it forms vast dense mats that trap silt and permanently alter coastlines. Rice grass has had devastating impacts in the Tamar Estuary, and an infestation in the Derwent Estuary has taken almost 30 years to eradicate.

In 2021, a small infestation of rice grass was discovered in Hastings Bay, Southport – the first time that rice grass has been recorded downstream of the Bowen bridge. With support from the Tasmanian Weeds Action Fund, Huon Valley Council is trying to eradicate this infestation before it can spread further.

To ensure that rice grass has been completely eradicated they need to make sure that all infestations have been found. This summer, Council will be working with Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service and Kingborough Council to search bays and coastlines in the Huon and Channel for rice grass, and would be grateful for any help they can get.



Rice grass (*Spartina anglica*)
Photo: Inger Visby, Derwent Estuary Program

Rice grass establishes on coastal mud flats, and patches can stand out as a lighter yellow-green amongst duller-coloured native reeds and grasses. Plants grow up to 1m tall and produce yellow flower heads in summer.

Possible look-alike: native reeds (*Phragmites australis*) can have similar coloured foliage to rice grass but are much taller (up to 3m) with light brown, fluffier flower heads.

A photo of suspect plants would be useful - but please be aware that mud around suspected plants should remain undisturbed, as rice grass can spread when small pieces of root break off and float away.



Rice grass (*Spartina anglica*)
Photo: Inger Visby, Derwent Estuary Program

Any suspected rice grass sightings should immediately be reported to:

Huon Valley Council: (03) 6264 0300,
nrm@huonvalley.tas.gov.au, or

Biosecurity Tasmania: (03) 6165 3777,
Biosecurity.Tasmania@nre.tas.gov.au.

Please note that **THE BULLETIN EDITOR WELCOMES SHORT ARTICLES/OBSERVATIONS/IMAGES** which other members may find of interest for inclusion in this newsletter! Please send to: tfn.bulletin.editor@gmail.com

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc – GPO Box 68, Hobart, Tas 7001

Annual General Meeting and Election of Office Bearers

The 2023 AGM will be held on Thursday 2nd March in the Law Department Seminar Room at the University of Tasmania, Sandy Bay. The President's Talk will be at 7.30 pm, followed by the AGM then a General Meeting.

Nominations are called for the following office bearers:

President

Vice President

Secretary

Treasurer

Bulletin Editor

Walks and Talks Co-ordinator

Librarian

Naturalist Editor

Three (3) Committee Members

Nominations should reach the secretary at the above address or via email secretary@tasfieldnats.org.au by Monday 20th February. Nominations for any position received after that date can only be accepted if there were no nominations for the position received by the secretary before that date (or fewer than three nominations in the case of General Committee positions). Any nominations after Monday 20th February should be delivered in person to the secretary immediately prior to the start of the AGM and can be accepted subject to the above.

A nomination form is attached below, but any written nominations will be accepted provided they contain the same information as in the official nomination form.

Nominations can also be emailed to secretary@tasfieldnats.org.au and the agreement of the nominee will be confirmed prior to the AGM.

Tasmanian Field Naturalist Club Nomination for _____ (position)

Name _____ Nominated by _____

Seconded by _____ Accepted _____